RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

ROBERT BENTON NEELY, Brigadier General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 16 December 1908, Delphi, Indiana

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 30 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 28 February 1963

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

The Field Artillery School, Basic and Advanced Courses
The Command and General Staff College
The Armed Forces Staff College
The Army War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

United States Military Academy - BS Degree - Military Science

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

FROM	TO	ASSIGNMENT
Aug 52	Jan 53	Student, Armed Forces Staff College
Jan 53	May 54	Dep Chief, Air Trans Div, OCOT, DA
May 54	Jul 56	Chief, Army Aviation Div, OCOT, DA
Aug 56	Jun 57	Student, Army War College
Jun 57	Sep 59	Field Army Trans Off, 7th Army
Sep 59	Jul 60	Chief of Mtrl Maint Branch, Log Div, USAREUR
Aug 60	Oct 61	Commandant, USATSCH
Nov 61	Feb 63	J4, Strike Command

PROMOTIONS **DATES OF APPOINTMENT**

2LT	12	Jun	33
1LT	14	Jun	36
CPT	1	Oct	40
MAJ	26	Feb	42
LTC	4	Sep	42
COL	30	Dec	50
BG	29	Jun	60

MEDALS AND AWARDS

Legion of Merit
Distinguished Flying Cross
Air Medal
Army Commendation Medal
Master Army Aviator Badge

SOURCE OF COMMISSION USMA (Class of 1933)

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Interview with **Brigadier General (Ret) Pobert B. Neely**

Brigadier General (Ret) Pobert B. Neely was interviewed 13 April 1985 by CPT Jim Mano. **BG NEELY** graduated from the United States Military Academy with the class of 1933.

BG NEELY discussed briefly his assignments before being sent to London in 1941 with the 34th Infantry Division to participate in the invasion of North Africa, Operation TORCH. He discussed the landings of his forces around Algiers and their eventual deployment to Tunisia. The role of a battalion of Nisei Japanese soldiers assigned to the division during its deployment into Italy was also mentioned.

BG NEELY's association with Army aviation was formalized upon his acceptance in 1946 to flight school. Upon his assignment as Commander, 39th Field Artillery Battalion, **BG NEELY** deployed to Korea, yet was able to continue flying as part of his battery visits. The difficulties encountered in assimilating Korea soldiers into American units is detailed.

BG NEELY became a member of the Transportation Corps as a member of the staff of the Aviation Section of the Chief of Transportation Office. He was involved in the planning of helicopter units, maintenance and supply, and research and development of helicopter assets. The General detailed his assignment as Transportation Officer, 7th Army, USAREUR in 1955.

This is the Army Transportation Oral History interview conducted with BG(Ret) Robert B. Neely on 13 April 1985 by CPT James B. Mano at **BG NEELY**'s home in Ketchum, Idaho.

CPT MANO: First of all, General Neely, I'd like to discuss your early years in the Army. We could begin with your graduation from West Point and your first assignment.

BG NEELY: I was associated with the Army because my father was an Army Officer and my first recollection and experience in the Army was at Fort Benning, Georgia, as a grade school boy. The family moved from Fort Benning to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, outside of Indianapolis. Later, I went to the Millard Preparatory School in Washington, D.C. and received a Presidential appointment to West Point.

CPT MANO: A Presidential appointment?

BG NEELY: They have a competitive examination, and I was seventh highest in the nation that year, of which I was quite proud then, and still am. I entered West Point in July of 1929 and graduated in 1933. Because of *my* previous experience at Fort Benning, I selected Artillery as my branch of service and requested Fort Benning as my station. I got both of them. I reported to Fort Benning and was assigned to the 83rd Field Artillery Battalion. My first activity in the battalion was as the Reconnaissance Officer for a horse-drawn artillery battalion which was armed with French 75's. I spent four years at Fort Benning with the usual functions and duties of the young artillery officers, taking part in everything that went on at the post. We had polo teams (I played polo), and we trained horses for horse show teams. I had a wonderful time at Fort Benning. I met and married a young lady whose family was also in the Army at Fort Benning. After four years, we were sent to the Artillery School at Fort Sill to the regular officers' course that was an enjoyable year. At that course, there were many, many classmates from West Point, and we had a wonderful time. When I arrived at Fort Benning there were 23 of my classmates also assigned to Fort Benning. We had many contemporaries and many good friends there. The same thing was true at Fort Sill when we got there. That's one of the unique things about the Army, when you are stationed in various places, you invariably are stationed with contemporaries that you've known before, and I think that was a charming part of the Army. At Fort Sill, I became very much interested in horse activities, and was selected for the Advanced Course in Horsemanship, which lasted a year.

It was very enjoyable, participating in horse shows at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, and Fort Sill, the three stations that were all quite active in horse activities. We used to call that the "Ham and Potato Salad Circuit" because wherever you went for a horse show, invariably the ladies had parties, and ham and potato salad was the principal part of the menu.

CPT MANO: It was like a big picnic.

BG NEELY: Yes, it was. After that year in the Advanced Course in Horsemanship (that was in 1939), we had an Olympics coming up in 1940. At that time, the Army was the principal source of competitors for equestrian activities. The Artillery and the Cavalry both had a horse show team. The two were combined and sent to Fort Robinson, Nebraska, as a training area. I was on the Artillery horse show team. After a summer up

there, we had Olympic Trials at Fort Riley, and I was selected as one of the riders in what was then called the "Three-day event." It consisted of one horse and one rider on three successive days competing in schooling, cross-country, and stadium jumping. While we were still in training at Fort Robinson, COL Tupper Cole, the Post Commander, assembled the two teams, and said he was very sorry, but there would be no Olympic Games that year, as a result of Hitler having marched into Poland that morning. We initially intended to have the Olympic Games at Helsinki, Finland. COL Cole said that even though the games were cancelled, they were going to continue with the training and trials. At the end of the trials at Fort Riley, they would select a team and then the teams would go back to their home stations and the whole activity would be discontinued.

The war had started, and I was involved in that. I was selected as an aide for then BG Leroy P. Collins, Commandant of the Artillery School. Everybody thought that we would eventually be drawn into the war. The last thing I wanted was to be stuck on a horse show team. I thought that the war would pass me by unless I got off that horse show team. I was quite elated when BG Collins asked me to be his aide. Shortly after I accepted, he and I were ordered to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, where the 34th Infantry Division was stationed. This was a National Guard Infantry Division made up of personnel from Minnesota, Iowa, and North Dakota. BG Collins was assigned as a Division Artillery (DIVARTY) Commander, and I was his aide.

CPT MANO: Did you leave your family back at Fort Sill?

BG NEELY: Oh yes, the family stayed at Fort Sill and eventually moved to San Antonio, and then to Washington, D.C. An interesting thing, when BG Collins and I left Fort Sill, being horse-oriented and not at all equipped for anything other than horse activities, the old man didn't even have a pair of slacks. He wore boots and breeches the whole time. I had to give him a pair of my slacks. We got on the train at Fort Sill and went to Camp Claiborne. We didn't even spend a whole day there as the division was en route to Ireland at that time.

CPT MANO: Ireland was a staging area for the II Corps, is that correct?

BG NEELY: Yes, actually the division went to Fort Dix first and stayed for approximately six weeks, then we got on the ship for Ireland where II Corps was being assembled. We stayed in Ireland for five months. It was during that time I became the S-3 for DIVARTY. When they began planning OPERATION TORCH, the invasion of North Africa, I was ordered to London to be on the planning staff.

CPT MANO: What year was this?

BG NEELY: 1942. In London, we established a Planning Headquarters in the Cumberland Hotel at the Marble Arch, and we lived in the Mount Royale Hotel. After a month in London, we went to Glasgow (Scotland) and boarded the HMS Bulolo, which was the Headquarters ship for the eastern assault force for OPERATION TORCH. To

go back just for a minute, when we left London, we gut on a train in great secrecy. The G-3 for the operation was charged, of course, with taking care of the plans for all the secret operations for the invasion. When we got on the train, he looked around and couldn't find his briefcase. He left the darn thing somewhere, so they stopped the train and sent somebody back to the hotel and sure enough, there it was.

CPT MANO: And these were the plans for the operation?

BG NEELY: Yes, for the whole operation. But we didn't know, of course, whether or not spies had gotten in and photographed everything and put it back where it was, but we went ahead anyway. We finally got up to Glasgow and got on the HMS Bulolo, which was a converted goldcoaster. That was the type of ship the British had used hauling gold taken off the coast of Australia. They'd converted it to a warship that included 5-inch guns and various 50-caliber machine guns mounted for anti-aircraft (AA) defense. But, in so modifying the ship for a Headquarters ship, they had placed a lot of generators and heavy equipment up high where the staterooms and offices were. The Chief Engineer of the HMS Bulolo said that it had changed the buoyancy of the ship. By putting the weight--up high, they had lowered the center of buoyancy and had made it touchy.

CPT MANO: Unstable.

BG NEELY: Unstable, yes. After we got out at sea, the ship would roll a lot. I thought a couple of times we were going over (almost 45 degrees), but we finally made it. While we waited for reinforcements to come from the United States, we rendezvoused with the British planning staff in Glasgow. Then we sailed north towards Iceland and down through the center part of the Atlantic.

CPT MANO: Was there any submarine activity there?

BG NEELY: Oh yes, we had aircraft and Navy escorts I was quite fortunate being in the Headquarters; we had communication with the British Admiralty every day. They had the German submarines all plotted. We would get a plot every day as to where they were, and they kept following us all the way.

CPT MANO: Was this a result of the British having broken the German's code that they knew where these submarines were?

BG NEELY: I don't know on that. It may have been, but they knew the locations of those submarines and the Germans were uncertain as to our destination. When we approached the Straits of Gibraltar, you could see the submarines all lining up. They must have thought we were going to Dakar, Senegal, but the convoy went well south of the Straits of Gibraltar. During the night, we turned around and went through Gibraltar Straits and left all the German submarines out in the Atlantic. Then we skirted the southwest coast of Spain as if we were going to Southern France. Of course, the German submarines followed us through to the Straits of Gibraltar. The convoy made a

360^0 turn in the Mediterranean and went right down towards Malta. In the middle of the night we turned around and went into Algiers, Algeria.

CPT MANO: How many ships were in the convoy?

BG NEELY: Oh gosh, I don't know. I don't know whether I ever knew how many ships were in the convoy.

CPT MANO: How many personnel were part of this operation?

BG NEELY: The 34th Infantry Division sent only one-third of the division-one combat team--and the British sent a division. That was the entire assault force for the landing. The British were in command of the landing until a certain phase. I've forgotten exactly when it was that GEN [Sir Harold R.L.G.] Alexander ceded overall command to the forces ashore. The landing at Algiers was primarily on the east side of Algiers. Algiers sits on a very blunt peninsula, and the City of Algiers is on the west side of that peninsula. The Bay of Algiers is on the west side of that peninsula also. For the landing forces we had designated a red beach, green beach and various other beaches. On the east of Algiers there was a long, very narrow peninsula at the end of which was Sidi Ferruch, a fort. We had expected quite a bit of resistance there. In fact, there was none at all. When we released the forces to make their landing, there was a French General at Sidi Ferruch complaining that we were late. He said they had had breakfast for us for a long time. There was no hostile activity there at all. We went straight west across the peninsula and ended up on high ground above the City of Algiers. We were overlooking the City of Algiers and the Bay of Algiers. That was only one part of the invasion force. Another prong of it went around to the west side of the Bay of Algiers and landed on the west side of Algiers. There was quite a bit of fighting there. That was the site of the French Naval Cadet School. They really put up a fight.

CPT MANO: Who were you fighting?

BG NEELY: Well, we were fighting the Axis forces. The French were loyal Vichy French forces. We were invading their territory and they were resisting.

CPT MANO: So these were French that you were fighting?

BG NEELY: They finally gave up completely. I don't know whether the Vichy government had been established then or not, or whether the Germans had completely overrun France by then. Here's this blunt peninsula I'm talking about. Sidi Ferruch is over here on this side. I don't have a blown up map of that area, but that's the general location. After the fighting stopped, the French then joined us. We were in occupation of the area. We took as our headquarters location the French and German consulate. The French and German consulate in Algiers was a very beautiful, Moorish architectural building. The Germans and Italians had an Armistice Commission there and they were taking food stuff (grain, wine, and anything else they could get) and shipping it back to Germany. The 34th Infantry Division's combat forces advanced very rapidly and took

the consulate. During the planning for the assault on Algiers we learned a lot about the city. We knew where the power plants were, the radio station, the newspaper offices and their printing presses. We had a plan to take all of those types of places immediately.

CPT MANO: Was there any coordinated resistance that was in conjunction with your landing, like were they supposed to blow out certain vital operations?

BG NEELY: Yes, there was an effort at that, but we pretty well overwhelmed it.

CPT MANO: So it wasn't necessary then to go ahead.

BG NEELY: No.

CPT MANO: Okay.

BG NEELY: And there was sporadic fighting. Some people just didn't get the word, I guess. The war was over as far as they were concerned. We actually took the consulate so rapidly that the people in it still had a hot meal on the table when we got there. We took them all in and put them in prison and took them back to Gibraltar. They were all sent back to Gibraltar, pregnant women and all. There were some of them, too. But that was quite an interesting operation. We established our headquarters in the consulate and occupied the whole place (I've forgotten how many months it was now) until the remaining part of the 34th Infantry Division came down from Ireland. Two-thirds of the division was still up in Ireland, but they came in and eventually, the division all got together. Then from there, we went east to Tunisia and finished up the Tunisian campaign there. Rommel's forces were coming back across North Africa, and we contacted them as soon as they got there. We had many of the usual experiences of forces that had not been in combat before, even though they were in some cases very well-trained, and in others, not very well-trained. We ran into many of the difficulties that you have with green forces. One of the regiments was captured almost completely by Rommel and his Afrika Corps. Some of our people sitting up on top of the mountains around Maktar watched them march off (I think it was most of the 135th Infantry).

CPT MANO: Okay.

BG NEELY: There were other forces landing near Oran and at Casablanca. One of the forces landing farther off to the west from where we were was the 3rd Infantry Division. This was the regular Infantry Division. After we had lost the 135th Infantry Regiment, they re-designated the 15th Infantry Regiment as the 135th and assigned them to us. Then, I think (I wasn't a part of it then) they were refilled with replacements and retrained. The 3rd Infantry Division did very well on the rest of the campaign. After we secured North Africa and the Afrika Corps was captured or disbursed, the 34th Infantry Division was left in Tunisia. All of the area had many mine fields and there was all kinds of armored junk all over the area. The 34th Division I was with was assigned the responsibility to clean it all up. You know when you run over a mine field, it doesn't

make any difference who put it in; if you run over a mine field, it's too bad. So they had to clean up all of that stuff. Accordingly, the division did not take part in the Sicilian operation, but we prepared for the invasion of Italy. Meanwhile, we were refilled with replacements and retrained while we were policing up the area.

CPT MANO: Yes sir, you told me an interesting story earlier about how you used aviation to help you do your job as an artillery officer.

BG NEELY: Shortly after we arrived at Algiers, we got our liaison airplanes and liaison section (mechanics, pilots, and supplies). We had no aerial reconnaissance capability up until then. After the fighting ceased in North Africa, we had our airplanes and we had been using them all along. I went to MG Charles W. Ryder, Commanding General of 34th Infantry Division, and asked him if he minded if I learned to fly**.** He said, "No, so long as you don't get me in trouble." I said, "Yes sir." The next day I contacted CPT Watson, the Division Aviation Officer, and told him what my plans were – I was going to take a flying lesson every day. I also contacted COL Coffey, the Division Engineer, and told him I wanted to put in an airstrip at Division Headquarters. So, I had my aviation section up there and went through a flying lesson every day.

CPT MANO: Who had air superiority at that time, or did anybody?

BG NEELY: Well, it varied. In the first part of the operation, the Germans had air superiority. Most of the people in the field hospital were those who had been strafed while in a jeep or a vehicle on the road. We eventually got air superiority and that ended that difficulty. But the smaller airplanes that we had proved very useful; I used them quite a bit. I was not a licensed pilot so I always took along another pilot with me sitting in the rear seat. We sometimes were dropping maps and doing various other things to various elements. After the Allied Forces took Sicily we were sent all the way back from Tunisia to a French Kaserne at Sidi bel Abbes, which was 45 miles south of Oran, Algeria.

CPT MANO: At this time, were you a battalion short? You had mentioned a story once where General Eisenhower....

BG NEELY: Yes, we were a battalion short because GEN Eisenhower, the Allied Forces Commander, had used one of the battalions of the 135th Infantry as security forces around Allied Forces Headquarters in Algiers. So the division was short one battalion, which we felt. We were told, while we were preparing to go to Italy for the invasion at Salerno, that we were going to get the 100th Battalion, which was a National Guard Battalion from Hawaii consisting of Nisei Japanese. They were, as you probably know, the most decorated unit to come out of World War II. I've kept in contact with them since then; I go to Honululu each winter.

CPT MANO: Is that unit still active now?

BG NEELY: Oh, yes. They've got quite a display of combat pictures in their headquarters. They joined us and we were told to put them into combat immediately. President Roosevelt sent a letter telling us what we were to do with them. During the invasion of Italy at Salerno, the resistance had collapsed there before we arrived. The 100th Battalion didn't know all that I knew about their not going to have resistance; we wouldn't let them fire anything at all, but they were prepared otherwise to really come in very aggressively. I made it a point to get there early and watch them come in. Let me tell you, they came in like they were going to overwhelm them right away. I had never seen anything like that before, but those Nisei Japanese soldiers were really very, very good.

CPT MANO: Did they get an opportunity to mingle with the other soldiers? Were there any hard feelings considering the war going on in the Pacific?

BG NEELY: None whatsoever. You know Anzio is the location of the Prepet marshes . You may recall prior to World War II, pictures of Mussolini stripped to the waist helping the laborers drain the marshes. Well, that's what Anzio is all about. There are these great big canals there. The top of the canal is more than a 100 yards wide and the banks are 200-300 yards wide sloping down, steep down to the lower part where the water is, which drains the whole area. You asked about the Nisei Japanese soldiers. I'd visit them quite frequently up on line, and a lot of them didn't speak English at all. I found one time, a couple of Japanese out there were fishing in a little tributary, a part of the canal. It turned out they were cooks catching some little fish down there. They had made a little puddle in the edge of the canal where they'd put their fish. I asked them what they were going to do with it. They were having rice that night for supper and planned to supplement it with fresh fish.

I have another story on the Japanese. Further up in Italy, I went to the battalion one time. They had five German soldiers and were going to kill them all. I sat them down and gave them a lecture. I said, "We can't do this; the Geneva Convention doesn't let you kill the prisoners, and besides you wouldn't want them killing any of our captured soldiers." They couldn't understand how any of their soldiers could ever become captured. Finally, I said, "Well, we have to get intelligence from these people and find out where their forces are so that we won't run into as much resistance or as many casualties. One of them said, "Well, then we'll kill all but one."

CPT MANO: They never killed anyone, did they?

BG NEELY: Oh no. In any event after Anzio, I went home.

CPT MANO: You went back to the States?

BG NEELY: Yes, I came back to the States.

CPT MANO: What year was that?

BG NEELY: That was '44, I think.

CPT MANO: So in 1944, you went back to where in the States?

BG NEELY: I was assigned to Army Ground Forces, I came back and wanted to go to (I hadn't been to Fort Leavenworth) the Command and General Staff School. So, I persuaded the personnel people to send me to General Staff School and was quite complimented, I guess. When I got out there, I found out that some of the orders that I had written were posted on the bulletin board as examples of what to do and what not to do (I'm not sure now). But that was a very interesting assignment. From there, I came back to Army Ground Forces and was a part of an inspection team that was inspecting units that supposedly were combat-ready (ready to be shipped to Europe), and I was running an artillery inspection team. We'd have little tactical exercises as a part of the technique of inspecting them and seeing how they operated. General Ben Lear was the Commander of Army Ground Forces, and he was unique, but sometimes difficult to work for.

One of the tales on him, one of the methods that he used whenever you would inspect a division that was ready to go was to assemble the inspection team after the inspection of the unit. The critique was usually held in a theater on a station. The officers of the unit are left outside the theater until the General had briefed his inspecting team as to what he wanted and what he didn't want. He would assemble the inspecting team on the stage in a semicircle around him sitting in the middle, and you had to give your critique of the exercise of the inspection. Invariably, he would delete a part and make a note or two. His criteria was not to praise anybody at all, not to mention anything that was not outstandingly good, but anything that was not up to regulation, give them hell about. Those, generally, were our guidelines. I remember very distinctly we were inspecting a division in Louisiana one time. It was a doggone good outfit, and the inspecting team at the pre-critique briefing had nothing but praise for the division, so it was pretty short when we got to the critique. The "old man" usually then got up and gave a summary or emphasized certain things. He was a pretty good soldier and everybody paid attention to him. He was known, I think at that time, as the Army's only "Three-Star First Sergeant." Whenever a briefing team finished its briefing, he'd then get up and drive home certain points, just give them hell about this and that. In this particular case where the division was very good, the briefing team had almost nothing except praise for it, but he found one of two things--a soldier patch missing here and there. He got up and raved and ranted on that for a while. Finally he turned around to the staff and he said, "What the hell am I talking about? This is a good division," and sat down. I enjoyed that tour of the inspection team.

CPT MANO: Did you travel all over the United States or was it just in that particular one that .....

BG NEELY: Usually the training was taking part in cantonments in Southeastern United States. So we went over to Texas a couple of times and to the Central United States, depending upon where the training stations were. After that, I was tagged, I think, to be

a part of a 17-division force to invade Japan. But they dropped the Atomic Bomb on Japan and that ended the whole thing. I was then assigned Army Ground Forces and stayed in Army Ground Forces until I was eventually..... no, I went to flying school then.

CPT MANO: In what year did you go to flying school?

BG NEELY: 1946, I think. The Army, realizing that the war was over and most of the aviation activity in the Army was manned by temporary officers (reserve officers) who would no longer be in the Army once demobilization occurred, devised a plan to take some regular Army officers and school them in flying. The initial course was for 19 officers to be sent to San Marcos, Texas for flying instruction. I applied for that and got it and went to San Marcos and then back to Fort Sill. After completing those two parts of the course, I was assigned to Headquarters, First Army, as the Air Officer at Governors Island.

CPT MANO: That's in New York?

BG NEELY: New York City in the harbor. As I've said before, that was one of dirtiest stations I've ever had. At that time, and probably worse now, there was a ship of some kind passing Governors Island every six seconds throughout the day, and they burned something. So, there was a continuous rain of soot and cinders on the whole area. That, accompanying the rest of the industrial pollution in New York City, made it pretty unpleasant at times.

CPT MANO: What did you do there as the Air Liaison Officer?

BG NEELY: The whole First Army area had many National Guard and Reserve units there. They had aviation units too.

CPT MANO: What type of units did they have and what kind of aircraft?

BG NEELY: They had the L-5's, L-4's, L-16's and L-17's then, which is the little Navion.

CPT MANO: Right. Were these more a reconnaissance aircraft or were they cargo-carrying type?

BG NEELY: No, reconnaissance.

CPT MANO: Any MEDEVAC aircraft in the area?

BG NEELY: Yes, the L-5's were all configured so they could carry litters. The others were not, though. We got our L-17's, as they called them, the Navions, while we were at Governors Island. I sent an officer, Jim Townsend, to San Diego to pick up the first aircraft assigned to us. He ferried it back across the United States, landed, not at Governors Island, but out at Miller Field on Staten Island, and ran into a rut and

collapsed the nose gear. So we lost our first airplane. We were assigned another, so I said, "Well, I better go get that one myself." So I did.

CPT MANO: You went out to San Diego to pick it up and ferried it back?

BG NEELY: Yes.

CPT MANO: How long did that take you then?

BG NEELY: I don't recall exactly, but four or five days I guess. I had a forced landing at Tucson.

CPT MANO: What was the nature of the emergency?

BG NEELY: The L-17 had a variable pitch propeller that was actuated by a Neoprene diaphragm in the nose of the aircraft that used the lubricating oil from the engine. That thing ruptured when I was outside of Tucson, west of Tucson a ways. As you know, it doesn't take much oil squirting out or something to obscure your vision completely. There I was, inside this thing and I couldn't see out at all. So there I was flying on instruments and I was not at that time instrument qualified, but I had a smattering of instruction. I couldn't see a doggone thing. The aircraft is configured with Plexiglas all around it except for a strut along each side that enables the canopy to move forward. In rear of that strut, which fortunately was not streamlined too much, there was an area that was not covered by the oil. I could lean back and see the wing tip on the right side and on the left side, but I couldn't see much else. So I called the Tucson Air Traffic Control Tower and informed them of my problem. They sent out a B-17 to escort me in. They brought me into the approach for the landing. As I approached I pulled the canopy back, so I had five to six inches that I could see out. I got it down okay and they got me a new diaphragm. I spent about a week in Tucson until they got the thing fixed up.

CPT MANO: Were incidents like that routine back then in aviation or was that just an isolated incident?

BG NEELY: That was an isolated incident on that particular aircraft. I never knew of another failure of the Neoprene diaphragm. But there was almost always something coming up, you know. That was an interesting experience. After Governors Island, I was building up my flying time, flying back here and there, and I finally went into Washington one day and found out that there was a vacancy in the Artillery Section of the school troops. So I asked for that position and was stationed at West Point for two years. The Department of the Army had two airplanes assigned there. I had them kept at Stewart Field, a 30 minute drive from West Point. I used an L-5 and a L-16 to keep up my flying time. We enjoyed that station very much. The requirement for flying training included a certain amount of night time, and a certain amount of instrument time (or under the hood or simulator time). I was meeting all of those requirements all the time. Whenever the cadets had tactical instruction, I had the artillery part of it. At this particular time, it was getting towards the end of the year and I hadn't flown quite enough at night, so I

was doing some night flying; working during the day and flying at night. I would take off from Stewart Field and fly on up the river to Albany and sometimes turn on West from Albany to Lake Erie, and turn around and come back at night. This went on for a few nights. I was not getting quite enough sleep, so I always carried a jug of coffee with me. This night I was in a hurry and I was late leaving work, so I forgot my jug of coffee and went on up to Stewart. I took off as usual up to Albany. I knew I was getting drowsy so I kept stretching out all the time. I got to Lake Erie and as I got out over the Lake, I did a 180-degree turn and started heading back home. Then I went to sleep and I remember dreaming about taking my two sons fishing. The airplane was humming along nice and stable. I woke up, all of a sudden, startled to learn I was down below the tops of the hills in a flat, big circle over the city of Syracuse. I was so startled that I didn't sleep any more the rest of that night. Don't try to make up night flying time when you are tired. I was stationed at West Point for a couple of years until the Korean War broke out. I was in Washington one time, again on a flying trip, and I went to the Personnel Office to see some friends. They asked me why I turned down an assignment to the 3rd Infantry Division. I said, "I didn't turn down an assignment to the 3rd Infantry Division." My friend said, "But your commanding officer did." I said, "Well, let's change that. I want to go to the 3rd Infantry Division." They said, "Okay." They changed it then. So I was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division, which at that time was alerted to go to Korea, which I had not been aware of.

CPT MANO: Was this 1951?

BG NEELY: No, it was 1950. We packed up and moved to Fort Benning, "my old home town.' I was assigned as Commanding Officer of the 39th Field Artillery Battalion. Actually we spent a very short time at Benning then. Like the saying was in the Army, you never want to hang the last curtain in your quarters or you'll be reassigned right away. We were reassigned and the family went back to live at Highland Falls just outside of West Point, and I went to Korea with the 3rd Infantry Division. Upon boarding the ship for Korea, everybody had to be inoculated. We had to take four injections, one for everything possible you're likely to get if you're anywhere in the Orient. I had already been immunized, but I couldn't find the record. I was insisting everybody's records be up-to-date and they have all the inoculations. I soon found out that I was one of those who didn't have any records. I had to take all four shots again.

CPT MANO: Today each soldier has two copies of his records to protect himself against something like that happening.

BG NEELY: We landed in Japan on the Honshu Island at the Port of Moji on the southern part of the Honshu Island, where the battalion disembarked. I insisted that all the soldiers save a clean khaki uniform for departure from the ship because when we got off the ship we were going to be good looking soldiers. So, we got off all cleaned up and then got on a Japanese train to go to Camp Maury, a training area up in the mountains above the little resort town of Beppu on the Island of Kyushu. We had this very nice Japanese train ride. Unfortunately, the Japanese train had a disposal port, which was a hole in the middle of the floor, about eight or ten inches in diameter, that

went right down to the tracks. All the trash, the sewage, and everything else went down that hole. It was a steam-powered train and when you went through a tunnel all the soot and everything would boil back up through that hole. All the soldiers in their clean uniforms really weren't so damn clean when we finally got to Camp Maury. Some trailing weather from a recent hurricane was still around at the time we arrived. We were lucky that the advance party had gone in and set up big squad tents for all of us. It was raining hard when we got there and the kunai grass was four or five feet tall making it all the more difficult to train the unit. We even had an earthquake the first night there. We spent about six wet and miserable weeks at Camp Maury.

CPT MANO: Were there any combat veterans in there from World War II?

BG NEELY: Yes.

CPT MANO: What was the experience level of your troops?

BG NEELY: The experience level of the 3rd Infantry Division was pretty high then. I don't know in percentages what it was, but there were quite a few combat veterans in the division. But the experienced personnel were cadred out because the US forces in Korea were being cut down quite a bit by combat losses. As you recall, they had been pushed all the way back to Pusan.

CPT MANO: Isn't that the Southeast tip?

BG NEELY': Yes. We were sending replacements to them all the time and we were cadred out. When the 3rd Infantry Division left Fort Benning, it was at less than cadre strength. I had my Artillery Battalion and I don't recall the exact strength. Let's see, you have five batteries and six or seven hundred men, and I was down to a one hundred and twenty-five soldiers and that's a lot less than an Artillery Battalion cadre. I had less than cadre strength of officers. There was a shortage of officers in Korea, so the DA used my Battalion as a carrying force. They filled the battalion up with officers. I had more damn officers than anything else. Of course we lost them all as soon as we got to Japan.

When we arrived at Camp Maury, we were down to less than cadre strength. They then filled the battalion up to 125 percent of strength with Koreans. I don't speak Korean, didn't then. Nobody else in the battalion spoke Korean. For the five batteries, they gave me four interpreters. We then started to process the Koreans as they came in. That's quite a task if you don't speak Korean. The Koreans that we got were the result of the Korean conscription system. I found this out during the screening of these recruits. We were required to screen all of these recruits to reduce as much as possible the possibility of the enemy, the communist forces, infiltrating or sending in people to sabotage everything. So, we questioned everybody as to what his background was, how much education he had, etc. In that, we learned how the Korean conscription system worked. One of the young Koreans was asked about how he was inducted into the Army. He said, "Well, I went down to the corner to mail a letter." We then realized

that the Korean system of recruiting was to surround an area and take all able-bodied men in that area into the Army. So that's the way he got in the Army.

We also were trying to find out about their skills, their education, and how we could use them to the best of their abilities. We were given six weeks to train them before we left for Korea. That was quite an experience to realize you were taking these recruits to war with you. Trying to train these recruits in just six weeks presented numerous problems. When you go down and surround an area to round up all the able-bodied men, you're not all that particular if they can read or not. We ran into the educational level problem immediately. Also, since they were peasants, we didn't have any idea of how they lived. They didn't even know what the latrine was. They'd defecate in the corner of their tent! They couldn't understand why they couldn't do that.

We had to institute immediately a system of discipline. We learned quickly the Korean system of discipline. We used a modified approach to discipline and punishment. If a minor infraction occurs, the penalty is slapping. The slapping consisted of not an open-hand slap, but a fist swung all the way to the ground. They would knock the kid right down. Clubbing was the next punishment for a more serious infraction. We wouldn't let them use anything but the bamboo which grew around there. A bamboo stalk is as big around as a pole-vaulter's pole. We cut small sections of that about 3 feet long. Initially, we made some Koreans acting noncommissioned officers and let them administer this clubbing. I saw one break a recruit's cheekbone with the damn club. We had to quickly modify that a bit after that incident.

CPT MANO: But this is what the Korean understood.?

BG NEELY: Uh, yes. Then the third degree of severity was execution. Well, of course, we didn't have any need of that. We would send them back to the Republic of Korea, the ROK Army is what they called them, for any punishment that was of that severity. They couldn't understand how to use the latrine, the long row of holes. They'd perch up on that thing like a bird. They wouldn't sit down. The mess hall--the first time we fed them--was pretty sad. Their equipment was spotty. Each Korean soldier got the cartridge belt; some had a canteen cover and no canteen. Others had the canteen cup, still others had the mess kit and no cover, and no knife, fork, or spoon. But the mess sergeant was faced with a real problem on how these people were going to eat, what to put the food in if the soldier had no mess kit. One of the U.S. Mess Sergeants came up with a solution. Everybody had a steel helmet. Some of them had the helmet and no liner, but everybody had the steel helmet. But the mess sergeant decided the best way to feed them was to have them use their steel helmet as their mess kit. They put all the food in there and they had one utensil. Most of them ate with their fingers anyway. They had never eaten with anything. That was the best food they ever had. As is usually the case with people, foreigners that you are not familiar with, they all look somewhat the same, and you can't distinguish between them right away. The mess sergeant had the same problem. They kept coming back through the line for more food. That was the best food they ever had. One of the mess sergeants got a big piece of chalk and

marked them if they'd been through line once. But these are individual stories on the whole thing and it was quite an experience.

CPT MANO: Did you have any of your artillery pieces there?

BG NEELY: Yes.

CPT MANO: Then you trained them as artillery men.

BG NEELY: Yes, we tried to train them within their limitations. We got a few U.S. replacements, not too many. I've got another story on replacements. When we got into combat, we went into Wonsan which is not part of North Korea. We didn't have to make an assault landing there. There was no resistance at all. But we had already decided that the use of these Korean recruits was going to be difficult. If you can't talk to a man, you can't use then for a radio operator and you can't use them for a telephone operator. In artillery, you have a hell of a time telling how to set a fuse or cut the correct powder charge. So we couldn't use them for some of these functions at all. You even have trouble using them as truck drivers. You have to tell a truck driver where to go and what to do. If you can't speak to the man, it's difficult. So, we took the U.S. soldiers we had, and assigned each one of them two or three and sometimes four Koreans as helpers. He was responsible for making them work. One of the first things we encountered after we got into Wonsan was digging emplacements, a gun pit. The Koreans found out right away that meals come right on time. It didn't make any difference whether they worked or not, they got their meals any way. So we finally found out that we had to withhold food, and if they didn't dig that gun pit a certain way, they wouldn't eat. That worked pretty well.

CPT MANO: Did that get their attention?

BG NEELY: Yes. When we got into Wonsan, I took the bank building as my headquarters. It had been partially destroyed but the bank's safe was still there. I got the Engineers to come in to cut it open. We got about five million dollars in gold out of it.

CPT MANO: What did you do with the gold?

BG NEELY: Oh, I turned it in, of course.

CPT MANO: Yes, I shouldn't have asked that question!

BG NEELY: That was a pretty good place there. Then we went west to establish a line across the Korean peninsula. After the landing at Inchon, the North Korean forces that were south of where we were, were all broken up. They broke up right away and started to run. So we established a line across the Korean peninsula to pick up all the forces there. We got a number of interesting things there. We picked up a Quartermaster Paymaster. He had money all over him. This was the North Korean Forces that were broken up. We were trying to prevent them coming north and to capture them all. And

we did get a good part of *them,* but we were scattered out all the way along the peninsula. I had one of my batteries with one of the infantry battalions that had our furthest station out to the west. They were in a reinforced and fortified battalion area. I'd take an airplane and go out and visit them—to see how everything was going on. One time I bent a propeller and couldn't take off, so I had to spend the night out there. But it was uneventful. The most exciting part of it was bending the propeller on this airplane.

CPT MANO: How did you bend the propeller?

BG NEELY: I don't know; I guess I couldn't stop it. They sent out another propeller. I didn't run through any tests at all; it ran pretty well so I flew it back. After the Korean Forces had all gone through, we captured some of them, the Division was reassembled, and we moved on into the line. Actually we went north to block the Chinese that were encircling the Marines at the Chosin Reservoir. We put the 3rd Division in there to block that. We were there holding line while the Marines withdrew. The Marines took quite a licking up there. When the Chinese came into the Korean War, the American Forces fell back. We were quite a ways north of the 38th Parallel when we were ordered to fall back. We withdrew to Hamhung [North Korea] that was another seaport where they were evacuating the forces by ship. The artillery was back behind a ridge of mountains which runs along the coast there. We were firing high angle fire with our 105mm howitzers. If you fire them up in the air on the way down they dropped in behind these mountains. Otherwise, the enemy was on the far side of the mountains so he was in defilade. But by using high angle fire we were able to hit him. I damaged most of the trails on my howitzers because in high angle fire recoil thrusts down, not back. I bent a lot of the trails on my guns so I had to have all that fixed. Then we were taken off the beach head at Hamhung. I was practically the last man off the beach because I had a jeep with a 309 radio in it and I could talk to the ships and the command. I was their only contact. They wouldn't let me come aboard for quite a while, but I finally got aboard on Christmas day, and we were all exhausted. I think we had two or three Christmas dinners. The division was scattered out. We couldn't all board the same ship or even the same flotilla. We were supposed to get off the ship half way down the peninsula. I've forgotten the name of the town down there, not Osani [South Korea], but one of those little towns along the coast. The commander of the fleet didn't want to stop there, so we went on. Here I was with my artillery battalion not having any idea where the rest of the division was. We finally were dropped off at Pusan, damaged guns and all, so I said, "Well, I guess I better get them all fixed up." I called a halt right there. I put the battalion in bivouac and stayed in Pusan until I could get the guns into an Ordnance Heavy Maintenance outfit. They straightened out all the trails, realigned all the equipment, and got everything all fixed up. We then started back up the Peninsula to find the 3rd Infantry Division.

CPT MANO: Is this in absence of orders? You were just going to look for your division now?

BG NEELY: Yes, I didn't have any orders at all. I didn't know where the division was, but I knew they were up there somewhere and I found them. That was an interesting

experience. We got through all right without any particular difficulty. There wasn't any resistance at all in that part of the Korean peninsula. Oh, there are a number of interesting tales about that operation.

CPT MANO: If you care to tell any, we would be interested to hear it.

BG NEELY: One crossed my mind a little while ago. After getting off the beach head there, I rejoined the division. We then went through the rest of the operation there. One time when we were up in the North, this was before we were taken down to Pusan, I used my airplanes to go out and make a reconnaissance. I tried every day not to spend too much time in the command post (CP). We happened to have a DIVARTY commander who really raised cane with commanders who sat around their CP all the time. I knew him from our service together at Fort Sill. So I made it a point to get out of the CP everyday. The 39th Field Artillery Battalion was the combat team partner of the 135th Infantry. So, I made it a point to get in my jeep and visit my batteries. I visited all the batteries to see that everything was going all right and then visited my forward observers with each infantry battalion. There were three infantry battalions out there. I'd visit all the forward observers of an infantry battalion each day, and contact the battalion commander, and then I'd go to the forward observers and to see how everything was going and see that everything was all right as near as it could be. Then I would come back and go back to my airstrip to get my airplane and make a reconnaissance of the whole corps front. By that time, it usually was pretty late in the day and sometimes almost dark. I would go back to the division airstrip, not to my airstrip, back to division airstrip, and land there and have supper with the division staff and brief the division staff on what I had seen and what I did. It was usually dark then, I'd have to leave the airplane there. At that time, you couldn't travel without an escort because there were quite a few ambushes. So, I'd get a division escort and go back to my CP. Next day, I'd do the same thing over again. I think the Division Commander appreciated that. Somebody who had been along and seen what was going on up there. So I came back and had dinner with them almost every night.

CPT MANO: How far back was the division from the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA)?

BG NEELY: I don't have an exact figure on that; it varied of course. But it seemed to me that it wasn't any more than four or five miles; anyway not very far back. So they were pretty close then. One time I wrecked an airplane in North Korea. My observer at the time was a LT Schaeffer. He had been a noncommissioned officer (NCO), but through my efforts he had received a direct commission, and I was now using him as an observer. I had LT Schaeffer in the rear seat of this thing, and we were flying along in an L-16. Up around Kusan-Ni in North Korea, there is a valley of rather steep mountains that run east and west, and it is intersected by a road and another shallower valley running almost north and south, making a cross-road there. I had an Artillery Battalion supporting the Infantry there, and I wanted to see CPT Adams, the

Battery Commander of one of the batteries. The weather was cold and still, and there was kind of an arctic smog limiting my visibility, but if you knew where you were going, then you could get there and back. We flew to where I saw the Chinese lines and from there I located where that battery was and then saw a place where I thought I could land. It was a long road, with a little snow on it, but there were tracks on it, so it appeared all right. I went down and dragged it like you're supposed to do, and it looked all right. So, I yelled back to Schaeffer, and said, "Are you game to go in?" He said, "Yeah, Okay." So, I sat her down, but it didn't stop and it just kept on going. The tires on that L-16 were smooth. I put on the brakes, and it seemed to pick up speed. We weren't going anymore than about five or six miles an hour. There was a dead tank just off the side of the road, and the right wing tip hit it, and there we were, down in the ditch. Well, it didn't hurt either one of us, but it incapacitated the airplane and so, there I was. I had already looked over the area and I knew, generally, where the battery was. I told Schaeffer to stay right there. We were a little bit ahead of the lines. I said, "If any enemy comes up here, you burn this thing up right away and get out the best you can." So I left LT Schaeffer and went looking for CPT Adams's battery. When I linked up with them, they were withdrawing. So, I said, "Well, hell, I'll tell you what you do. You unload one of your long-wheel base trucks and let me have it and a driver, and a couple of mechanics, and I'm going back and take that airplane apart, and put it in the truck." I then went by a couple of little houses and I got some straw mattresses and a couple of wrenches. I took the wings off the airplane, sat it up in the truck, put the wings along the side, put mattresses along the wings to protect them and away we went. It was dark by then, so I stayed with CPT Adams that night and called the DIVARTY Commander on a radio and sent a message as to where I was. MG Roland Shugg had a staff meeting every day and I wasn't there. That was an infraction right there; it is terrible, for a Battalion Commander not to show up at a Division Commander staff meeting. It wasn't until the next day that I found out that somebody reported that I was missing. MG Shugg knew where I was, since he had already gotten the message. Somebody on the division staff said, "Well, he's out there fooling around with that flying machine." MG Shugg's remark was, "Yeah, but at least he wasn't sitting on his ass in his nice warm CP." He thought that was fine and I turned out to be a hero. After I got back, we got another airplane. That was a little incident that I remember very distinctly.

CPT MANO: Did that plane ever fly again?

BG NEELY: Yes. Shortly after that, I got word that I was promoted to a Colonel. I had been a Lieutenant Colonel up to then, and my code name was Eagle. My unit then, the 139th Field Artillery Battalion call sign was Eagle and I was Combat 6. Combat Eagle was my full unabbreviated call sign and I remember the Assistant Regimental Commander calling me on the radio. I didn't know that I had been promoted, and he was calling me on the radio. He said, "This is so and so, calling Combat Eagle, Combat Eagle over." I knew Combat was the code name, and I was Combat 6, but he was calling "Combat Eagle, Combat Eagle." I couldn't understand so I finally responded and said, "Well, this is Combat 6, who are you calling?" He replied, "I'm calling Combat Eagle; you just made Eagle." That was the first word I had. After I was promoted out of my job, we had an L-5 as one of the aircraft we were assigned. So, I was ordered home.

The L-5 had to go in for an engine change, anyway. So, I loaded all my gear in the back end of the L-5 and took off and went down to Pusan, turned it in and got on the Air Force Evacuation System. If you went to Japan, you couldn't come back to the United States without going through a physical examination. So, we had to go to Japan to a general hospital for the exam.

CPT MANO: What year was that now?

BG NEELY: 1950 and 1951.

CPT MANO: This all happened during 1950?

BG NEELY: Yes, in the winter of 1951. I went in for the physical examination in Japan, and the doctor said, "Well, go down to the end down there and you'll see a booth. You need to report there to get your physical." I went in the booth and there was a WAC sitting there. I told her I was reporting for a physical, and she took my papers, looked at me, signed everything, and said, "You look pretty healthy to me, Colonel." I replied, thank you very much." That was the quickest physical I ever had. I then came back to the United States. I was assigned to the VII Corps Artillery at Camp Campbell, Kentucky. Before the family arrived there from New York, I was ordered to the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk. Rather than move the family from Highland Falls to Norfolk, I moved them to Washington, D.C., and kept them there while I was flying back and forth on a number of very short assignments. That's when I transferred to the Transportation Corps.

CPT MANO: Why did you transfer to the Transportation Corps?

BG NEELY: I went to the Transportation Corps because of the aviation activities that had been assigned to the Transportation Corps. They had supply and maintenance units and some helicopter units.

CPT MANO: Were you effected, as many Army aviators were, when the US Air Force was being established in the late 40's? When they switched over to the Air Force were you asked to join the Air Force?

BG NEELY: No, I was in the Artillery.

CPT MANO: So, your flying was basically done for the Army; it wasn't B-17's or anything like that?

BG NEELY: No, I was Artillery, and had been to the Air Force Flying School and the Army Flying School at Fort Sill. I hadn't even contemplated going into the Air Force. But when I transferred to the Transportation Corps, I was assigned to the Chief of Transportation's Office in Washington, Building T-7, I think it was then.

CPT MANO: Was that in the Pentagon?

BG NEELY: No, that was over near the National Airport. MG Paul F. Yount was the Chief of Transportation at that time. LTG William B. Bunker, the Assistant Chief of Transportation for Army Aviation, was a Colonel at that time and I was his deputy. At that time, we were responsible for supply and maintenance and direction of the helicopters in the Army inventory and their equipment. That was my first aviation-related assignment. We also were in charge of research and development. It was during this three-year tour I became very interested in Transportation activities, although I was specifically responsible for aviation activities. I didn't know much about Transportation. I knew, generally, what Transportation Corps did and how they went about it, but I had little if any experience with it. We were organizing and planning the stationing helicopter units. One of the first things that I look back on with a certain amount of satisfaction, was that I insisted on stationing helicopter units at Fort Benning. The reason was I felt that a primary purpose of the helicopter, the H-34's in particular, would be to carry troops. If you're going to learn how to do it and teach the rest of the Army how to do it, Fort Benning and the Infantry School was the place to do it. So, we put them down there, and I think that was a pretty wise move. Otherwise, they would have been stuck off somewhere and perhaps would not have been used by the rest of the Army, at least by the Infantry.

CPT MANO: Is that where the Air Cavalry was born?

BG NEELY: No, what you are talking about is the Air Assault Division. I did not get into that, but this was an experimental division that I think began at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, with an Airborne Division there. I was not involved in that, but it has evolved into what they have right now. I think that's one of the principle functions of a helicopter, of course, is carrying assault troops. I stayed with the Transportation Chief's Office until I went to the War College at Carlisle Barracks, and after that was assigned to Headquarters, Seventh Army in Vaihingen, Germany, as the Transportation Officer. There, I got my principal experience with Transportation elements, truck companies, truck battalions, and so on. We had a group there supplying the Germans with coal. They would all have frozen to death over there one winter if they hadn't had the American truck units to haul coal to them.

CPT MANO: Is that right? What year was that?

BG NEELY: That was 1957.

CPT MANO: Why were they using the Americans?

BG NEELY: The German system of transportation is based on the rail system and it used to be illegal for bulk materials (coal, stone, building materials) to be hauled on the highway. It had to be hauled on the railroad--on their Eisenbahn [German railway]. That was to protect their Autobahn [German highway], so that the heavy materials were not carried in trucks. Railroads can't distribute coal to everybody; they have to come into the Bahnhof [train station] and unload it. In this particular year they had a very, very cold winter. The Germans were running out of coal, so they resorted to using the US Army

Transportation elements to haul coal. We had not only the aviation activities, maintenance and helicopter units, but we also had trucks, ports, and rail. I found my Seventh Army assignment was quite an interesting assignment.

CPT MANO: Did you do much traveling around inspecting?

BG NEELY: Yes, I went to the port quite frequently.

CPT MANO: Bremerhaven?

BG NEELY: Bremerhaven, yes, and back to the other installations where the truck battalions, aviation maintenance units, and the helicopter units were. I was moving around quite a bit.

CPT MANO: What were the helicopters doing in Germany at this time? What was their mission?

BG NEELY: They were taking part in exercises. When the Army would go on tactical exercises, they would take the helicopter companies out to move the troops back and forth, on an experimental basis just to try them out. The Infantry officers would like to use them, but we didn't have too many helicopters, so it was rather selective as to where you would put them and how they would use them. We had a number of problems with the helicopters. I mentioned just once before that the availability of the aircraft for flying was much less than it should have been because of the time required to put the aircraft in the shop and change the various components. They would run out of time on an engine, a rotor head or a gear box of some kind. The time expired on the gear boxes at a different time than it did on the engines, or rotor head. So, there-was a continuous pattern of putting the aircraft in the shop to change some part. In order to cut down the number of hours the aircraft was in the shop, we devised a scheme to divide the H-34 into three sections. We decided that when you'd put the helicopter in the shop for an engine change, you would change everything in the forward section that was on a time changed requirement. Even though there was some time left on the particular part, you wasted that amount of time, but the aircraft was in the shop much less time than it would be otherwise. Accordingly, our availability went up quite a bit.

CPT MANO: What was your goal at that time for availability? Did you have a particular percentage that you wanted to be able to fly at any given time?

BG NEELY: I don't remember, I think it was probably around 70 percent of them.

CPT MANO: That hasn't changed too much. Right now, it's 75 percent for the Huey's.

BG NEELY: I don't think we ever reached 70 percent, but that was the goal. I helped school quite a few people in the use of the helicopter. A helicopter is not the end all and be all in Transportation because it has quite a few limitations. As the helicopter has developed, it has improved considerably. The Chinook added considerably to the Army

helicopter capability. Then we got the Huey's (the UH-lB's) that added even more. That was followed by the arming of the helicopters, which added a third dimension. But, I think the helicopter has become one of the primary weapons of the Army. This is not only true of the US Army, but all the rest of the Armies, the Soviets included.

CPT MANO: The Russians are spending millions of dollars on their helicopters. We are starting to do air-to-air tactics now, and it's going to become part of our training program. We will have to engage another helicopter or a fast mover with a helicopter. That's another dimension right there in fighting.

BG NEELY: I remember in the development of the Chinook. Originally Piasecki, and then Vertol were the companies that manufactured the Chinook and its modifications and/or improvements. When they were testing that helicopter, they had an H-16, which was one of the early experimental models of the larger tandem rotor helicopter. At the time I was working in the Chief of Transportation's Office. I was very much interested in the Chinook's development. One day I went to Philadelphia to see the H-16 to learn first-hand how its development was coining along. I then planned on going to Bridgeport, Connecticut, to see the research and development people. When I landed in Philadelphia, I had already told them I was coming, they had the H-16 there. It was completely instrumented so that all of the critical parts, such as the blades, rotor heads, and everything else, were instrumented so you could see the operation on a panel where they recorded all the strain on various parts. The test pilots, named Peterson and Callahan, had run most of the tests on this aircraft. They had the helicopter pretty well ballasted at its designed gross load. I said I wanted to fly in it to see how it was operating. It had twin turbines on it and everything worked fine. I flew it for a while and landed, came back, and got in my airplane and took off for Bridgeport.

Meanwhile, Callahan and Peterson had such good performance out of the aircraft earlier in the day that they wanted to go back and establish a record for altitude for an aircraft of that weight. They ballasted her up and started out. I've forgotten how many thousand feet they went to, but the whole thing was recorded. They broke the record and then put the helicopter into a smooth, autorotation on the way down. Then the pilot checked it at 1000 feet, and went down a little below 1000 feet, came up to 1000 feet, and the rotors contacted each other cutting each rotor apart. There was such a terrific force wrenching that helicopter that it twisted it right in two and killed both Callahan and Peterson, by cutting their heads off. Their heads were found in their helmets. The reason for the accident was instrumentation. The vertical drive shafts are quite big and they're hollow. The wiring to the rotor blades for the strain gages went through this hollow shaft and they were in conduits. The conduit was secured by a bearing in there so when the shaft went around, the conduit didn't move. It was factory lubricated, supposed never to fail, you didn't need to lubricate it periodically. But it failed and the shaft on the inside began to wobble. As a result it hit the edge, side, or the conduit in same place on each rotation until it finally wore it in two. When it snapped in two, it desynchronized the rotor systems. That's what caused the rotor blades to hit each other.

CPT MANO: And you were the last one to make a safe flight on it?

BG NEELY: Yes. My family didn't know of the accident. They got a report immediately that there had been an accident, that all aboard were killed. Posy [wife] didn't know anything about it, but they reported it on the radio. I didn't know anything about it at all since I was still airborne. All of a sudden, the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) called me. I called them back, and said, "Yes, I'm all right, why?" They told me about the fatal accident.

CPT MANO: It seems like you've escaped death a few times in aviation.

BG NEELY: Well,, you fool with this stuff long enough, and you run into a few critical situations. Well, I don't know whether we've covered a lot about how aviation was developed in the Army, but we've covered some of it anyway, *my* experiences at it.

CPT MANO: After your Seventh Army tour, you came back to what?

BG NEELY: I came back to Ft Eustis to be the Commandant of the Transportation School.

CPT MANO: Were you still a full Colonel at this time?

BG NEELY: No, I had been promoted while I was in Europe.

CPT MANO: Just a question on that, how did you know that you were going to be promoted to Brigadier General? How does that happen?

BG NEELY: Well, they put out a list of those who are under consideration. Then they publish the list of those who are selected. I was fortunate enough to be on the list of those selected. I was on duty in the G-4 Section of Seventh Army and was designated as the new Commandant of the Transportation School. We then packed up and left for Fort Eustis.

CPT MANO: Were you promoted in Germany?

BG NEELY: Yes, and afterwards we came to Fort Eustis. We occupied that old dental clinic, the Commandant's quarters, which was a very comfortable set of quarters, and I took over the Transportation School. That was an instructive and very pleasant assignment.

CPT MANO: Who was your boss at the time you were the Commandant of the T-School at Ft Eustis?

BG NEELY: MG Norman Vissering. He had the Center then, and I had the School. One of the things that I look back on with a certain amount of satisfaction is that I began a system whereby the students in the aviation maintenance classes would have to work

on training aids. You know, pieces of the aircraft or pieces of the helicopter that were no longer servicable but could be used for students to disassemble and reassemble. Some of them were from aircraft that were complete aircraft. They would have to put the aircraft all together. I instituted a system whereby some of those aircraft were made into flyable aircraft. Students, after assembling an engine or a rotor head or something like that, would have to fly in the aircraft that they worked on. I don't know whether that created any incentive for them or not, but we always thought that it did.

CPT MANO: Were you still flying at this time?

BG NEELY: Oh, yes.

CPT MANO: When did you learn to fly helicopters?

BG NEELY: While I was in the Chief of Transportation's Office. I felt that if I was responsible for the procurement, testing, and so on of these aircraft, I ought to have a little more experience with them. So, I went back to Fort Sill for the Helicopter course.

CPT MANO: That's where they had helicopter training?

BG NEELY: Yes.

CPT MANO: In what helicopter did you first learn on?

BG NEELY: We were flying the Hiller H-23, and the Bell H-13, and we had H-34's there too. I got checked out on all three of those aircraft when I was in the school. Incidentally, I'd been at Fort Sill for roughly five years before that at the Artillery School, and so on, and I knew the whole terrain out there very, very thoroughly.

CPT MANO: So you did well on the map reading portion?

BG NEELY: Oh, yes. One of the things that was much more enjoyable and effective with the helicopter, was making a reconnaissance. Rather than on horseback I would take a helicopter. I could go to the top of all the mountains around with the helicopter and get back. Gosh, some of these I never had been on before. They'd just been too far away, too hard to get to--on a horse.

CPT MANO: That's a big role, particularly in the Air Cav today, to use the helicopter as Scouts.

BG NEELY: But I enjoyed the helicopter school there. It brings home to you, if you have any difficulty with a helicopter or any aircraft, the importance of the mechanic. I got an H-34 at Fort Si11 one time right after it had gotten out of some required periodic maintenance. It had an oil change, I know, because I picked it up, started it up, took it out, and brought it back. The oil pressure and the oil gage temperatures didn't appear to be quite right. I set it down on the ramp and they came out waving to me to cut down

the engine. There was a big oil leak. The maintenance man hadn't secured the drain plug and all the oil was being pumped out.

CPT MANO: That just goes to show you a good pre-flight has saved your life too.

BG NEELY: Oh, yes. But there are a lot of little things like that that you run in to.

CPT MANO: So, how long were you the Commandant at the School?

BG NEELY: A little more than a year. Then, I was asked to be the J-4 of the then Strike Command, now the Readiness Command, at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

CPT MANO: And what were your duties there?

BG NEELY: I was the J-4, the supply officer for the joint operations and planning of any requirement that was put on the Strike Command or in maneuvers. We had the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force as the ready forces of those components. That was my job--to see that we had the necessary J-4 support and that the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force provided the necessary support for the elements that they provided. They were under our command at the time.

CPT MANO: Where did you go after the MacDill AFB assignment?

BG NEELY: I went to work for the Boeing Corporation. I had, of course, worked with those people, particularly, their Helicopter Division all the time I was in the Transportation Corps. I knew them and they knew me. So when I was preparing to retire, they asked me if I would work for them. Well, I deferred for a while and finally, they came to me with a concrete offer. They wanted me to establish an office in Munich for them. I thought about it for 15 minutes and said okay.

CPT MANO: Not a tough decision I wouldn't think.

BG NEELY: I then went to Munich and established an office there. The principal assignment I discovered was making contacts with Army personnel of the Military Advisory Assistance Groups (MAAG) in all the capitals of Europe. Without exception every time I would go anywhere (it didn't make any difference if I went to London, or to Paris, or Rome), there was a MAAG there. I made it a practice to contact them immediately. Nine times out of ten, mostly ten times out of ten, there were good friends of mine there. They knew the local government people. I was in the process of trying to indoctrinate the foreign NATO armies on the use of aircraft, encouraging them to buy helicopters. I would then call on the Ambassador. Nine times out of ten, he couldn't see me because he was busy with something else. Then I would call on the Military Attache, the Air Force Attache, the Navy Attache, and the commercial Attache, just to tell them that I was there and what I was there for. Many times they would say, "Yes, we would like for you to meet so and so." It helped a lot just to make those calls. We didn't sell many aircraft, but we did sell 50 Chinooks to the Italians and 50 to the Shah (Pahlavi) of

Iran. The Italian helicopter business was controlled then, and may still be, by the Augusta Company, owned by Count Dominico Augusta.

CPT MANO: It is still controlled by him.

BG NEELY: Any helicopters that were manufactured or procured by Italy at that time had to be through Count Augusta. So, we were quite anxious that he be aware of everything that was going on. In order to sell them to the Italians, they insisted that they be built there. They arranged for a licensing of the Augusta Manufacturing Company to build the Chinook. It turned out that they really were not manufacturing any of the parts. They assembled the parts. They did manufacture ailerons and a few odds and ends, fuselages, and so on. Generally, the parts were manufactured by the Boeing Company and sent over there. I don't know how that is done now, but in order to do the manufacturing or the assembling that they did, they had to build a plant. So they went to Frosinone, that's 35 km south of Rome, and we had the Italians build a plant there. That's where we built the 50 helicopters for the Italians and the 50 for the Iranians. I don't know what's going on now, but at least that was the plan.

CPT MANO: I think Augusta is now called Augusta-Bell.

BG NEELY: Anybody that sells any kind of helicopter in Italy had to go through them and Bell too. But they had the same kind of an arrangement with the Bell Company. I don't know which part of the helicopter the Italians actually make, but, generally, it's a Bell helicopter.

CPT MANO: You recounted a story earlier where you went up to Alaska with some 80 helicopters. I wonder if you could just give me a little background as to why you went up there and how you ran your operation, and in particular, any maintenance problems that you might have encountered.

BG NEELY: The maintenance problems there were handled very well, I thought, primarily because we brought along a mountain of supplies. We brought home more supplies than we used while we were up there. The objective of the entire operation was for the 309th, Topographical Engineer Battalion, to complete a survey of a strip 25 miles wide along the Arctic Ocean all the way around from Barter Island, which is on the Arctic Ocean at the Canadian Border, all the way around through Prudhoe Bay, through Point Barrow, and turning south to Kotzebue. They completed that in one summer. The helicopters, of course, enabled them to do it in one summer. They wouldn't have been able to do it by even now, I don't suppose, if they hadn't had them. But, that was a very satisfying experience. I spent most of the summer up there. I had never been on the Arctic northslope before. We established our main base at L)miat, a small settlement on the Colville River. I say the middle - it was quite central between the USA-Canadian border on the Beaufort Sea (Arctic side) and Kotzebue on the Bering Sea (Pacific side). There is a Distant Early Warning (DEW) line radar station there. All along the Arctic coast line, there are radar stations for this distant early warning radar. They have very nice airstrips at all of these stations used by the Air Force or other aircraft to bring in

supplies. The DEW line installations are manned by commercial contract companies; it was Western Electric when I was up there. We used their strips once in a while, but usually the helicopters wouldn't use the strip. We had about 60 to 70 airplanes and about 80 aircraft. They started establishing their bases before the ice went out. You'd land an airplane on these iced up lakes at the site where you wanted the Spike Camps, temporary camps, for the survey crews and bring your supplies and pontoons to the nearest airstrip. They would put the pontoons on the airplanes, and let them sit there until the ice melted and there you were sitting on the pond. That time of year, with 24 hours of daylight, you didn't have to slow up your maintenance or any of your work because of darkness. The helicopters were vital to the whole operation. We had a pretty high availability, almost 80 percent.

CPT MANO: Would you have to do any major assembling replacement like engines and stuff like that?

BG NEELY: Yes, we replaced engines, rotor heads, and blades. Flying there in the summertime for a helicopter is sometimes not as easy as you think. There are so many mosquitoes up there, and I never thought they would be a hazard. But, if you're hovering a helicopter out over the tundra, there are just swarms of mosquitoes. They build up on a rotor blade the same way ice does. You have to land and scrape the damn things off.

CPT MANO: It would send up a vibration and....

BG NEELY: Correct, but it didn't create that much of a problem. We did loose one or two pilots to Arctic owls that nest in the tundra. One flew up into the tail rotor. When they fly up and hit a tail rotor thus knocking it off, it puts the helicopter out of control. We lost a couple of pilots that way. COL Wayne Downing, who commended the 309th Topographical Engineer Battalion, was decapitated, but not due to an Arctic owl mishap. He was in a welcoming party waiting for the arrival of a tandem rotor helicopter. While in the process of landing the pilot brought the nose of the helicopter up to high causing the rear rotor to touch the ground which knocked a piece of the blade off, cutting COL Downing's head off.

CPT MANO: Was there a big push for safety back then on helicopters? Particularly before a briefing or before anyone actually went out to fly, he would he get a safety briefing, per se, about what he is going to be doing. Or was it a lot of guys that had a lot of experience and they just went out and flew because they just knew about safety? How much was safety emphasized back then?

BG NEELY: Safety was emphasized but it wasn't emphasized to dominate the instruction that was going on. Everybody was well aware of the fact that the tail rotor will cut you up, as will the main rotor, and you stay away from the damn things.

CPT MANO: Right now the aviation safety drives every mission that you have. As a matter of fact, before anyone can go fly a test flight or anything like that, his next chain in command has to brief him and it has to be documented.

BG NEELY: I wrecked a helicopter at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, one time. Had I done all the inspection, I don't know that I would have uncovered the difficulty that caused the accident or not. But what happened, I was out practicing with the helicopter doing autorotations at zero speed, you know to set her down as near zero speed as you can. I had a young officer with me who was just going along for the ride. I had just bought a very nice new military cap--a Horstman. I had taken it off and put it out in the forward nose of this Bell helicopter. I had a flight cap on and I put the headset on and was practicing autorotations. Everything was going fine, until this time, I set down, and we weren't going any more than five or six miles an hour or even less. I noticed out of the corner of my eye, the right skid just fold up. Then the left skid folded up, and the helicopter... of course, the rotor blades were still turning. God, the helicopter went crazy and was torn all to pieces. Luckily, neither one of us was injured, but my cap in the front end of the cab got oil all over it. The skids were worn through. You know on that aircraft you can take the tail skid and pull it down and look at the bottom of the skids. I did that after that accident. But the bottom of the skids were worn all the way down. There was just nothing there. They were full of gravel. As a matter of fact that doesn't hold the helicopter up very well. Had I turned it upside down or pulled it up and looked at the bottom of the skids, I wouldn't have flown the thing.

CPT MANO: Nowadays, we reinforce it with a steel strip. We have certain helicopters designated as training helicopters and we do a lot of running landings. Just as an aside, the Army does not do autorotations any more. The only time you do them is in flight school and up until two years ago, you did them out in your unit. They cut it out because they were seeing too many accidents during training autorotations. It's a two year program to see if it actually reduces the accidents. All the Instructor Pilots out in the field want to bring autorotations back. In particular, if the younger pilots are not proficient in it, when they actually do have to do it, they're going to have to delve all the way back into flight school when they learned how to do it. There's going to be too much of an experience gap.

BG NEELY: I had to do an autorotation at night, flying a helicopter out of Fort Belvoir one time. We were flying at night, and I was not right at the field, but pretty close to it. All of a sudden, there was a terrific bang from the engine behind me. I thought, good God, what's this? So I put it into an autorotation. It wasn't a moonlight night but it was dark. I picked what I thought was a nice field and I set it down. I eventually got out and looked at the engine and saw that one of the V-belts had broken and that's what had hit the firewall and made the racket. Well, the rest of the belts were there and they were working all right, so I picked it back up and took it back to Belvoir. I went over to that field the next day and found that the field was full of stumps.

CPT MANO: So, you were just lucky?

BG NEELY: Yes. But I'd set her down with hardly any forward speed any *way.*

CPT MANO: I'd say you used up eight of your nine lives.

BG NEELY: Yes, I know.

CPT MANO: Is there anything else you'd like to say before we conclude our interview?

BG NEELY: There are probably all kinds of tales I could tell. In regards to weather, you have to be careful when you're flying. You ought to have an aircraft that's equipped for it and you should be proficient at it. One time I was not proficient at weather and neither was the aircraft equipped for it. I was on the way back to Governors Island in an L-17, a Navion. I stopped into Washington, DC, because the weather was not looking too good. I landed at Bolling Field. I don't know whether you can use that anymore or not.

CPT MANO: No, we can't.

BG NEELY: My mother and father lived in Washington, DC, so I stopped in for the night there. Before I left Bolling Field, I went to the weather office and asked them about the weather. They said, "Well, we've got a front going through here and you're going to run into freezing rain just about daylight. If you get out of here early and take off before daylight, you'll be ahead of the storm." I said, "Well, I'll take a chance on that." Incidentally, they didn't have 90 octane fuel there which is what that aircraft used. So I said, "Well, I've got enough to get to New York anyway, so just let her sit." They said, "Okay." The next morning as I drove back to Bolling Field, I noticed a little rain on the windshield. I went in and talked to the weather people and they said, "If you take off now you'll be ahead of the storm." I said, "Okay, fine," got clearance, and away I went. I took off from Bolling Field and headed right for the light beacon, north of Annapolis, Maryland, out on the coast. I could see the beacon after a while, and I was planning on a regular compass course north from there to New York. But right after I took off from Bolling Field, it was like someone threw a dishpan full of water at me and froze it on the windshield. Oh, my gosh, I couldn't see much of anything, but I knew where I was going and thought I could just keep going and would run out of this weather in a little while. I did run out of it, but I stayed loaded up with ice. So I just kept pushing the throttle forward, using more and more power to stay where I was, and more and more gasoline, too. I found the light, and turned north out over the swamps of New Jersey and was going along fine, when all of a sudden I noticed the gas gage. The L-17 Navion's gas gage looks like the one used on Fords, and the needle was pointing below the "E". So, I thought what the heck could I do? I'm too far away to go back to Bolling, there are no fields around here, but the airplane looked like it might quit any moment. I figured that if she quit, I'd land it in the swamp with the gear up. I continued along, all of a sudden, McGuire Field slid under me. Boy, I didn't even call the tower. I just turned around and landed right away. I called them and told them where I was and that I ran out of before I could taxi in. I told them what the problem was and they sent a mechanic out. I couldn't open the canopy--it was frozen shut. They took a wrench and hacked me out, cut me

out. We towed that little airplane in and let it sit in the hangar. It sat there most of the day before all the ice melted out. Boy, oh boy, I wished I had refueled.

CPT MANO: I have a hard time leaving an airport that has fuel and I don't have a full tank. Sir, on behalf of the Transportation School, thank you very much.

BG NEELY: You're welcome.